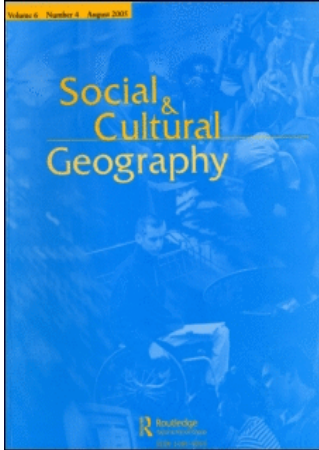


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# On the edge: a tale of skaters and urban governance

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*The 'problem' of skating has been conflated with a 'problem' with young people in public spaces, reflecting a rise in fear of crime from the mid-twentieth century and referencing more general questions about public space and citizenship. My task in this paper is to highlight some of the tensions between skating and urban governance in Franklin Square, Hobart, the capital city of Tasmania in Australia. This task is indebted to ideas about governance and citizenship advanced by Nikolas Rose; about the proper city as conceived by Michel de Certeau; and about fortress strategies and species of spaces promulgated by Stephen Flusty. Franklin Square functions in two ways in this work. First, its examination encourages consideration of local cases. Second, it can be deployed as a heuristic device through which to explore the edges of public space and citizenship. The essay is intended to make two contributions to social and cultural geography, one enlarging on some well-rehearsed debates about situated and contested socio-spatial relations in what I hope are innovative ways, the other unsettling particular strategies that place skaters 'on the edge' and yet draw them into particular domains of citizenship via specific practices of urban governance.*

**Key words:** urban governance, skating, spatial relations, citizenship, youth, Hobart.

## Introduction

Skating poses conceptual and practical problems for many urban managers (those professionals vested with authority in planning, engineering, social and community development, economic development, risk assessment, and parks, landscape and heritage management). The normative tendencies in urban governance appear in conflict with how skating is embodied and enacted. In particular, both urban managers and many non-skaters in the ranks of 'the general public' constitute skating

as jeopardizing the civic and commercial virtues of urban spaces and the rights of other users of those spaces (Borden 1998, 2001). Skaters are renegade [to renounce or deny].<sup>1</sup>

Problematically, rather than acknowledging the loose, often unstructured but rarely undisciplined practices of skating, and instead of countenancing creative accommodations of these practices, urban managers—and especially those removed from social services—tend to reduce the problem of skating to a problem of managing young people in public

spaces which sometimes reduces to a problem with young people *per se*. This assignment of problem status accords with a rise in fear of crime from the mid-twentieth century through which fear itself has been theorized as 'the product of victimisation, as the consequence of a breakdown in social control or as being mediated by the urban environment' (Bannister and Fyfe 2001: 808–809). It also references a more general set of questions about 'the relationship between the aesthetic experience of public spaces and the possibilities that these same spaces hold for citizenship' (Featherstone 1998: 911).

Skaters are unlikely to conform to normative ideas and narrowly circumscribed regulations classifying skating as either recreation *or* transport because, more generally, they are negotiating the range of accommodations they wish to make in any social interaction (Dean 1997; Emler 1993). But this explanation about adolescent experimentation with levels of social accommodation is partial at best, and it may readily be captured and redeployed as a discourse of disapproval or disappointment (*your accommodation was inappropriate or insufficient*). Such rhetoric also refuses the salience of skaters' claims for space in urban locations (*why should I make this accommodation to, say, commercial interests?*) and may demonize skaters—many of whom are boys and young men—in the process.

My task in this paper is to highlight some of the tensions between skating and urban governance with specific reference to Franklin Square in Hobart, the capital city of Tasmania in Australia. I am using urban governance to refer to a set of neoliberal political and bureaucratic processes through which urban managers attempt to co-ordinate and balance public and private interests, and to devolve responsibilities (Harding, Wilks-Heeg and Hutchins 2000; Kearns and Paddison 2000; Pierre 1999). The

significance of this 'take' on urban governance is well captured first by Rose (2000: 1395), who views it as part of a 'new politics of conduct that seeks to reconstruct citizens as moral subjects of responsible communities'; second by Flusty (1997), whose architectural commentaries on 'building paranoia' illustrate the use of fortress spaces to protect morality and community so configured; and last by de Certeau (1984), who suggests that the city is a primary space in the constitution of 'proper' social relations.

This task is part of a research programme on skating, urban governance and youth in Australia's state capital cities funded by the Australian Research Council in 1999. It also takes in findings from a consultancy on the legalization of street skating conducted for the Tasmanian Government from September 1999 to March 2000 (Stratford and Harwood 2001), as well as teaching and research exercises in Hobart during the period from 1997 to 2000 (Stratford 1998). In what follows, I reflect on the space that is Franklin Square (the Square, the park) and examine disparate claims to it, drawing on narratives from interviews conducted between 1997 and 2000 in Hobart with State and local government staff and elected representatives, business owners, non-skating members of the general public, and skaters.

Franklin Square has two important functions in this work. First, its examination encourages reflection on local cases. Such deliberation is critical to debates in the urban governance and planning literatures about the legitimacy [legality, authority, authenticity] of claims to space or the management of such claims. As will become clear, skating in Franklin Square has been a most contentious local issue precisely because it is a space of multiple publics and therefore of multiple conflicts. Nevertheless, debates about the use of the Square and its surrounds have been

articulated in simplistic and polarized terms that invoke general and problematic stereotypes—unavoidable clashes between ‘unproductive’ skaters and ‘productive’ commercial interests and citizen-consumers—that leave little room for rapprochement.

Second, I use Flusty’s typology in relation to Franklin Square to make two contributions to social and cultural geography. First—in what I hope are novel ways—I augment some well-rehearsed debates about situated and contested socio-spatial relations (de Certeau 1984; Harvey 2000; Lefebvre 1991; Shields 1997). Second, I unsettle specific rhetorical and governmental practices that work to marginalize skaters while simultaneously drawing them into particular domains of citizenship via new practices of urban governance and the ‘spatialisation of virtue’ (Osborne and Rose 1999; Rose 2000). Skaters’ own accommodations and manipulations of these practices are also elaborated.

Franklin Square thus functions as a heuristic device through which to explore in more detail particular fortress strategies and spatial types outlined by Flusty (1997) in his analysis of the architectures of fear—strategies and spatial types reliant, one might suggest, on ‘the edge’ (Corner 1999). Here, the edge is a metaphorical and literal device that evokes a range of productive positions, spatial and social, that characterize skating in the city and skaters in relation to urban governance. As real and tangible space, it is a critical element in skating; curbs, benches and stairs—any street item with ‘perpendicularity’ provides a space—a route—on, over and through which to skate. These spaces often demarcate functions, such as those that distinguish footpath from road, sitting area from standing or walking area, which are read and used by non-skaters in ways quite differently from skaters. The micro-spaces of the street thus become sites of conflict—edgy, unsettled, disrupted, contested.

Moreover, the conflicts that arise between skaters and non-skaters enunciate and etch the differential positions that the various actors occupy in social relations. Skaters claim renegade status to mark themselves as sub-cultural yet in conversation and interview lament their disempowerment in formal and official claims for public space. Non-skaters claim citizen status to mark themselves as more mindful of the social contract—of virtue—than those whose occupation of the edge is governed by their skating practices.

### Placing Franklin Square

In 1811, Governor Lachlan Macquarie laid out what was then known as George’s Square in the place of the original (1804) Government House (Hobart City Council 1988). Like so many other public geographies (Sennett 1976), the Square was part of a larger area designated for various civic functions, including market days and musters of civilian and convict populations. Following the end of the transportation of convicts in 1853, part of that area was turned into a park. A photograph from 1863 shows a statue of the one-time Governor, Rear Admiral Sir John Franklin. Less visible are the oak trees that were planted that year, commemorating the marriage of HRH Edward the Prince of Wales and HRH Princess Alexandra of Denmark; today, one oak is still marked by a small dark plaque recording that earlier event. In 1898, the park’s care was enshrined in Government Notice No. 57, and was given to the community through provisions in the *Crown Lands Act 1890* (54 Victoria 8). That Notice regulated visitation to the park, banned animals and prohibited any offensive acts that would disturb the peace or lead to damage; it was already, then, a policed and contested space, a proper space, edged and bounded.

Since 1923, Franklin Square has been managed by Hobart City Council, and is now maintained by the Parks and Landscape Unit (Hobart City Council 1997a). Planning and maintenance of the park occur within a wider strategic framework that includes economic development, environmental and heritage management, community well-being, quality management and customer service, and urban enhancement (Hobart City Council 1997b, 2000a). The Square is part of the central bus interchange, abuts the main shopping precinct in the city as well as major State and local government offices, and therefore is well used as thoroughfare, recreational precinct and territory. Since the mid-1990s, it has also been the scene of complex and edgy territorial disputes among different but overlapping groups of people, including Aborigines, street kids and other youth (Wood and Williamson 1996). Simultaneously, the Square is one of several sites through which the Council provides a range of formal community development services (Hobart City Council 2000a). It is, for example, a venue for the 'People in the Parks' entertainment programme, a significant summer tourist event for locals that complements the internationally renowned Sydney-to-Hobart Yacht Race. It is often marketed as a verdant haven in the heart of the central business district of Hobart, a site of European cultural heritage and civic life.

The Council's activities in Franklin Square align with its various community development policies. Among these is the Youth Services objective:

To facilitate the development of a city in which young people are highly valued and active participants in community life by advocating, planning and coordinating youth services through active partnerships with young people, appropriate agencies and individuals. (Hobart City Council 2000a: 32)

Flowing from this objective, community development officers are charged with various tasks that enshrine, in principle, the citizen status of young people and bring them into the moral and physical domains of community life, keeping them on the straight and narrow. Officers are meant to achieve this by identifying and responding to young people's needs; increasing awareness in the community of the contributions young people make to city life and of their particular hopes and potential; facilitating an increase in the participation of young people in community life more generally; and integrating education, training and enterprise initiatives for young people. Illustrative of the prominence of skating as a particularly political local issue, the Council community development staff are *explicitly* required to address issues 'arising out of increased use of skateboards and small wheeled contrivances as a recreational and transport activity for young people' (Hobart City Council 2000a: 32) because skating has been viewed as contrary to the image of youth that Council policy engenders (Anon personal communication February 2000).

Sometimes at odds with such objectives, under the *Local Government Act 1993* (Tasmania's Consolidated Legislation Online 2001a), the Council must also provide statutory planning in line with legal and corporate requirements, managing its properties efficiently, and undertaking urban design projects to enhance the character of the city and maintain high standards of amenity. It must promote community awareness of heritage and conservation, in accordance with the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* and the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* (Tasmania's Consolidated Legislation Online 2001b, 2001c). As part of this brief, the Council is to '[e]stablish appropriate mechanisms for the conservation and management of all culturally significant Coun-

cil property' (Hobart City Council 1997b: no page).

Perhaps inevitably, conflicting demands arise in these two tasks to advocate for young people and their claims for space, and to protect heritage sites and urban amenity. From time to time these demands have been irreconcilable in Franklin Square, where young people meet to socialize, and skaters use park fittings and fixtures to 'pull moves'. Certainly, some of the tensions between skaters and others stem from the undeniable fact that skating has resulted in damage to items of cultural heritage such as the large sandstone fountain honouring Franklin, or infrastructure more recently provided by the Council—seats and paving noteworthy among these.

Tensions among users of the Square also manifest because, given the nature of their practices, skaters dominate much of the space of the park at certain times of day—before and after school being the most obvious as they wait for buses at the adjacent interchange or gather to socialize. During these times, skaters will often traverse the length of the park's central paved areas to gain speed that allows them to jump from steps, or grind across the edges of park benches, the fountain, or the steps of the Speaker's Corner.

Given what turns out to be the park's strategic location near government and business offices, its proximity to the central bus interchange, and perception of skaters as dangerous or disruptive, it is perhaps not surprising that on numerous occasions the Council has been called upon to ban skaters from the Square or the central business district altogether. Such calls are underpinned by particular views of Hobart's urban space as predominantly commercial and governmental, and thus inappropriate for skating, and they are informed by a prevailing assessment of the city's young people as trouble, as ignoring the social contract

among citizens, and of making public space edgy. This assessment is exemplified in *The Mercury* newspaper, which has reported on the issue of young people in the city in dozens of articles and letters to the editor. One letter notes:

The Hobart City Heart organisation [to market the CBD] is trying to entice people into the city with free parking and large amounts of money in advertising ... But what can be done to make the central city area safe so as people can be sure they will not be harassed as they walk about the central city? If you take time to speak to the general public many have had nasty experiences by being harassed for money or pushed about by young adolescents who have taken over the city streets and the mall to the detriment of business, shop owners and the public. The police have limited resources and must be frustrated by all the paper work generated reporting these assaults, and with little success in apprehending the perpetrators. Can't we reclaim the city and move these people on—or else business in the city will gradually slow down and close down. (*The Mercury* 1997: 18)

Appeals such as this are not uncommon, particularly during economic downturn. Certainly the focus on an alleged need for more authoritarian and direct forms of policing on the street (White 1994) and for planning remedies that uphold normative views of the city as an economic arena also reinforces negative stereotypes of urban youth as permanently organized in menacing gangs (Allen 1994). They further marginalize young people from the category 'the general public' and from the 'status of citizen', even though such status is protected under the *Youth Justice Act 1997* (Tasmania's Consolidated Legislation Online 2001d). Indeed, this appeal indirectly and inadvertently references the separation of adult [public] play spaces from children's [private] play spaces

from the seventeenth century, a separation that serves to constitute the meaning of the proper city (Sennett 1976).

Alternative views about skaters and Franklin Square exist, however. Eleven days after the publication of the letter quoted above, for example, another resident of Hobart countered:

I am always glad to see kids waiting around in Franklin Square for buses or socialising rather than in the mall or around the shops. I think it is an excellent use of a park which is otherwise generally only used as a thoroughfare. One side of the park which is almost never used could be transformed into a skating ramp area with no real inconvenience to most park users. This would encourage the kids to be physically active and keep them from the Government buildings end of the park. (*The Saturday Mercury* 1997: 18)

Despite opposition to the first writer's position, this commentator still sees merit in zoning youthful activities away from precincts of political activity, a strategy deeply embedded in the utilitarian equation that traditionally informs land use planning (Huxley 1994) but which, in this instance, is contrary to the range of responsibilities that Hobart City Council has in relation to the protection of cultural heritage in the Square.

### Spaces of citizenship

More generally, the conflicting positions staked by these commentators reproduce in miniature a series of debates about the spatially situated and contested nature of social relations in the city. de Certeau (1984: 94) notes that the city manifests via the 'possibility of [a] threefold operation'. The *first* is the production of *un espace propre* (its own space, the space of the

city) in which compromising 'pollutions', physical, political or mental, are repressed [marginalized, placed on the edge] because they threaten to jeopardize the rationality of the space created. Conceived as one such pollution, skating is beyond what is conceived as the rational and legitimate use of city space. Its legalization as transport in Tasmania on 1 July 2001 (Stratford and Harwood 2001), and attempts to manage it by providing purpose-built facilities, only marginally unsettle that view despite the second operation by which the city is manifest. This *second* operation is the creation of univocal strategies or rules, in which the everyday and the particular are flattened out and rendered less visible, through which the *third* operation is possible, namely the constitution of a total and anonymous subject, the city itself—a proper name in de Certeau's terms.

Urban governance, a product of these three operations—proper spaces, totalizing rules, proper names—involves both differentiation and redistribution of the parts and functions of the city via rational means, and a simultaneous rejection of those things that cannot be dealt with in such a manner. de Certeau suggests that abnormality, deviance, illness and death number among these 'waste products' (1984: 94) although he acknowledges the possibility of their reintroduction into the spaces of urban governance via 'progress' in health, security and so on. The legalization of street skating suggests just such progress, the desired (but never fully realized) transformation of complex socio-spatial practices from feral to orderly conduct, of skaters from outcasts to citizens (Stratford and Harwood 2001).

Critically, this progress is viewed as particularly important in advancing young people's moral well-being. In discussing the historical and spatial contingency of childhood and adolescence, Valentine (1996) suggests that modern

youthfulness is a set of circumstances implying incompetence, dependence, segregation and delayed responsibility. Valentine also argues that planning is part of a series of regulatory regimes in which public space is repeatedly reinforced as adult space, civic space. Her assertions are not isolated to the Anglo-American context, with various Australian commentators having published widely on youth 'problems', planning and spatial politics (Polk 1997; Sandercock 1997, 1998; Simpson 1997; White 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 1999).

Thus, it is perhaps not unexpected that the 'problem' of children and young people in public space has been configured in terms of a problem of citizenship, its meanings, scope and characteristics (Matthews 2001; Speak 2000; Woolley 2000). Citizenship confers rights, privileges and obligations on the members of political collectivities. It embraces civil, political and social elements, bringing into play particular and morally based ideas about both the social good (Painter and Philo 1995; Sennett 1976) and sentiments of belonging and commonality often far removed from material conditions and social context (Leca 1992; Staeheli and Thompson 1997).

In late capitalism, citizenship also centres on consumption and the symbolic meanings attached to it (Jameson 1984; Miles 1998; Zukin 1995). The privatization of public space, an attendant loss of community trust and the search for scapegoats among the young has resulted in such public space being constituted—borrowing from Sennett's (1994: 375) historical analysis—as 'empty space, a space of abstract freedom but no enduring human connection'. Others demur, suggesting that this emptying and disconnection are never complete. Indeed, many people use public spaces to make both formal and informal political and spatial claims often related to demands for wider conceptions of citizenship (Young 1990;

Zukin 1995). Nonetheless, such spaces diminish [in size, in number] as processes of institutionalized inequality—such as the creation of mass private space [the Mall] via partnerships between government and business (White 1997b)—accelerate under neoliberal capitalism.

Critically, citizenship as reconstituted through this form of private–public governance does not benefit minors, with reasonable evidence to suggest that 'many of these policies represent attempts to increase the social control of children [and young people]' (James and James 2001: 211). In no small measure, these tendencies to surveillance and exclusion arise from the circuitous tendency to interpret signs of social disorder as causes of such disorder, and thus to impose zero tolerance on those who would disrupt the consumptive norms set by government and market that constitute the citizen-consumer as virtuous (Body-Gendrot 2001; see also Lynch and Ogilvie 1999).

Clearly too, citizenship is always spatial. According to Castles (1998: 201–202) citizens are always citizens of somewhere, and the city is a particularly powerful locale (though not the singular category/scale of analysis) in which the 'notion of shared community and culture as the basis for citizenship becomes particularly problematic' (p. 202). There, the social and economic differences that citizenship constitutes among people are magnified and rest on ideas of inside/outside, near/far, de/reterritorialization, flow/boundary, edge. As a defensible space for the free passage of the citizen-consumer and others with civic virtue (Miles 1998), the street is a particularly salient symbol of this constitution of difference (Goheen 1998). In this schema, skaters have no legitimate claims to space in the city, even where their activities—as transport—have now been legalized; the city [commercial heart] has been fortified. So to the work of Stephen Flusty.



## Skating Franklin Square

Flusty (1997) writes of fortress strategies including the privatization of public space and the policing of such space for respectability [civic virtue, the mark of the citizen]; the militarization of space through surveillance; the use of defensive architecture and design; the imposition of curfews; and the commodification of public space. He suggests that at least five 'species' of space have emerged to protect the powerful citizen-consumer who benefits from these strategies and refers specifically to occupants of affluent walled suburbs. Nevertheless, his taxonomy is worth quoting at length in this context, because it highlights the multiple publics of Franklin Square, and emphasizes de Certeau's proper city and Rose's ideas about the normalizing tendencies of urban governance.

*Stealthy space*—space that cannot be found, is camouflaged or, more commonly, is obscured by such view impediments as intervening objects or grade changes ... *Slippery space*—space that cannot be reached, due to contorted, protracted, or missing paths of approach ... *Crusty space*—space that cannot be accessed, due to obstructions such as walls, gates, and checkpoints ... *Prickly space*—space that cannot be comfortably occupied, defended by such details as wall-mounted sprinkler heads activated to clear loiterers ... *Jittery space*—space that cannot be utilized unobserved due to active monitoring by roving patrols and/or remote technologies feeding to security stations ... [and he concludes] we are unlikely to spot these spaces in isolation ... [for] they tend to be deployed simultaneously, so as to form distinctly unfriendly mutant ... typologies. (1997: 48–49; emphasis added)

Unbound from its referent, the walled suburb, Flusty's nomenclature is usefully deployed to pinpoint the complex micro-spatial practices in

Franklin Square. For example, the Square is *crusty* space for some non-skaters because, in claiming Franklin Square for themselves, certain skaters defend that space by using the differential velocity provided by their boards as an obstruction to others to ensure that other<sup>2</sup> pedestrians are forced—either by intent or by default—to the park's margins:

We do not believe skateboarders have the right to take over a popular park such as Hobart's Franklin Square and their activities are disturbing what was once a peaceful lunch location in the city. I recently visited Franklin Square at lunchtime to feed our baby and found the atmosphere quite threatening as skateboarders jumped from seat to seat, so I retreated to the bus stop area. (W\_P\_, letter of submission, 8 February 2000)

Some of the claims made in this letter are readily understood. Like the driver who speeds or the jogger who forces people aside on the footpath, there are skaters whose actions endanger others and themselves, and jeopardize wider claims by some skaters for 'sympathy' as a 'class' of citizens. Nevertheless, the gap between intent and effect is important here, with some skaters acknowledging that they do not understand the fuss and mean no harm:

Like lots of things I think it is just a few bad eggs or young people who have run into older people on their boards or damaged the sandstone around the fountain. I don't really see how it can cause so much trouble. I can understand that people come here to relax and skaters can be noisy and get in people's way but it doesn't really harm that many people, and where else do they [skaters] go? (Skater, Franklin Square. Interview with author September 1998)

Unaware of the potentially devastating effects of injuries to the elderly, and conciliatory in

tone, this assessment suggests no malice aforethought. Rather, it suggests innocence about (perhaps even slight impatience with) non-skaters and their assumption that skating is necessarily disruptive and that skaters are dangerous. Indeed, there is in this narrative a claim for citizenship (observing the social good) and for the space its status implies.

Nonetheless, without full discussion among Councillors, in 2000 Hobart City Council Parks and Landscape staff edged into Franklin Square and rendered parts of it *slippery* space for skaters, replacing brick pathways with lawn during maintenance of the Square's Speaker's Corner,<sup>3</sup> the marble steps of which were favoured skate space. Lawn, of course, is simply unskateable. Similarly, strategies to protect a new waterfront square close to Franklin Square have also produced spaces that are simultaneously *crusty* and *prickly* for skaters. In the case of Mawson Square, where there is no lawn, steel L-bolts have been attached to the front edges of benches to prevent skaters from grinding along their surfaces, to edge them out. Yet, in conversation some skaters acknowledge that this and comparable design strategies are less demeaning to them than signs (such as pictures of skaters with boards and a red line through them) that ban skating and that are read by skaters as meaning that they (and not just skating) are unwelcome. Nonetheless, it would be simplistic to suggest that all skaters thus support crime prevention through urban design (Newman 1972); to do so would be to accept a normative understanding of skating and diminish skaters' individual and collective powers to critique the practices of urban governance as problematic.

Occasionally, too, skaters comment on the surveillance under which they feel they are kept; one unconfirmed and popular story among younger skaters in Franklin Square is that the adjacent Treasury building contains

cameras that are trained on them. These panoptic strategies, if such there are, may serve to produce *jittery* space, but in this instance it is a space as much imagined as real. Furthermore, it is easily dismissed by skaters themselves in light of other imperatives:

I don't have the phone on. [I come just] to connect up with every one basically—with friends. I work nights and don't usually have a lot of time during the day so I like to come here on Fridays and see people I haven't seen all week. I also like to come here and skate ... Also with skate parks they always put skate parks out in the burbs. People want a central meeting place as well and it is a big ask to put a skate park in prime real estate but they won't use skate parks if they are out in the burbs. For me I like the idea that it is in the city but there are still so many trees—it is so green. That really attracts me... (Skater, Franklin Square. Interview with author March 1999)

This is a rich narrative reflecting the need to socialize, connect and get around; the allure of the city, the edginess and immediacy of the centre; the politics of urban land values; and the attractiveness of verdant surrounds. Skaters, in common with others, seek particular attributes in the city; for them accessibility, sociability, compatibility with others with the demands of skating itself are critical (Woolley and Johns 2001).

Alternatively, *stealthy* space is the space in which skaters, police and local by-law officers play hide-and-escape or hide-and-surprise. Stealthy space is constituted by the regular foot patrols that members of *each* group undertake in order to pinpoint the presence of the others, the former to avoid the issue of traffic infringement notices or other penalties, the latter to hand them out.

Skaters do have their own minds. A good example of

this is the skaters [*sic*] opinion of Franklin Square, some love it, some don't. On the favourable side, they love the smooth slippery surface it has to offer and the sound their board makes vibrating underneath those paved bricks. Franklin Square can be a buzz, especially when there's fuzz involved. It makes it hard to concentrate on flips knowing that a blue uniform may appear at any time. Even the daring skater sitting on the bench who cries wolf loves to see them run to avoid that evil traffic infringement notice of \$20. (Aardvark 1997)

This narrative is full of references to spaces that constitute the edge. Skating's unlawful status in the park demands stealth. Indeed, skaters tell me that they sometimes post a lookout to warn of pending trouble from authorities; hence Aardvark's pun about crying wolf. It is difficult, nevertheless, to concentrate because police on foot patrol may appear to hand out traffic infringement notices by which the illegality of skating the Square is marked; here, repeated, is jittery space.

Then again the reference to smooth and slippery surfaces—slipperiness markedly different from that meant by Flusty—is reminiscent of the imbrication of smooth and striated space entertained by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). '[W]e must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture ... but the *de facto* mixes do not preclude a *de jure*, or abstract, distinction between the two spaces' (1987: 474; no italics in original). It is perhaps this formal distinction that is held most firmly in strategies to manage skating. Such strategies, according to Deleuze and Guattari's framework, are bound to fail *because the formal cannot hold*.

### On the edge of the proper city—by way of conclusion

I began by positing that, in the city proper, the

'problem with skating' is reduced to a 'problem with young people'. Suggesting that this reduction reflects specific tensions between skating and urban governance, I also noted that concern among urban managers about skating in the city is part of a larger discourse on fear of crime, victimization, social control and urban design. Various material effects of this larger discourse are evident in Hobart, including both the production and policing of particular spaces (walled suburbs and inner-city precincts, malls, parks and squares, and streets) and the development of methods (surveillance, urban design, direct action) to protect citizens and property; the city proper. These socio-spatial practices of urban governance (of which Flusty's species of space are a part) invoke specific forms of citizenship in which oppositional views and practices are classified as trouble, self-interested or special interest (Grant 1994).

Simultaneously and paradoxically, recent shifts both in how urban governance is conceived and practised and in the reconstruction of the citizen [autonomous, responsible], mean that skaters *need* to be accommodated in the city. They must be embraced as moral subjects and provided with opportunities to participate in responsible community life. Hence, throughout Hobart (and indeed Tasmania) local and State governments, business and industry alike are actively engaged in community education programmes, youth development, community safety programmes, intergenerational bridge building and other partnerships. These strategies are designed to bring young people in general and skaters in particular 'in from the edge' but this 'making proper' of skating is not welcomed by all skaters because, indeed, the edge is a valued space for them:

skateboarding is local, being fundamentally concerned with the micro-spaces of streets, yet is also a globally dispersed and proliferous practice, with tens

of millions of practitioners world-wide. It addresses the physical architecture of the modern city, yet responds not with another object but a dynamic presence. It says almost nothing as codified statements, yet presents an extraordinary range of implicit enunciations and meanings. It produces space, but also time and the self. Skateboarding is constantly repressed and legislated against, but counters not through negative destruction but through creativity and production of desires. It has a history, but is unconscious of that history, preferring the immediacy of the present and coming future. It requires a tool (the skateboard), but absorbs that tool into the body. It involves great effort, but produces no commodity ready for exchange. It is highly visual, but refutes the reduction of activity solely to the spectacle of the image. It began in the suburbs, but has come downtown to the core of urban conflicts. It is seen as a child's play activity, but for many practitioners involves nothing less than a complete and alternative way of life. (Borden 2001: 1–2; see also Sennett (1976) on playfulness and planning)

In Hobart, this shift in formal responses to skating mirrors the embrace of new styles of urban governance and novel forms of citizenship, and takes two forms. The first is accepting the need for a central and purpose-built skate facility. Although a complete shift in emphasis from skating as sub-cultural (Beal 1992) to skating as mainstream spectacle is highly unlikely, it now has enough support among Hobart City Councillors and (not insignificantly) key stakeholders in city business to 'merit' a central facility. In a long-awaited response to the 'problem' of skating in the inner city, Hobart City Council (2000b) has dedicated \$AUS 120,000 (\$US 62,146; £stg 43,279; Euros 70,712) to construct a major skate facility in a larger mixed-use 'Cultural

Park' behind a senior secondary education centre for grades 11 and 12 about a kilometre or so north of the central business district—that is, on its edge. The second is an acceptance of skating as transport, and the addition of new layers of zoning to the municipal area such that high pedestrian areas—particularly in commercial precincts—are to be declared 'no-go' zones, a terminology that serves to place skaters back on the edge, where inclusive signage [carry only zone, for example] would have avoided such ambivalence.

And Franklin Square? Its spaces are constituted *first* in particular strategies by which the city proper is made through structures of governance—legislation, regulation, strategic planning, community development, and *second* in specific tactics by which various actors claim the space of the Square and the wider city—through correspondence, media exposure, the use of velocity, and face-to-face disputations (de Certeau 1984: xix–xx).

Tensions among all those who claim the Square may also be rooted in more general conflicts about the ways in which civic life and behaviour are constituted. But as urban governance is refined as a double movement constituting autonomy and responsibility (Rose 2000), and as community is again conceived as a web (rather than a chain) of relations, as well as a 'measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity' (Etzioni 1997: 127; Giddens 1998, 2000), urban managers will find themselves working through a troubling logic which, on the one hand, demands accommodating the skaters and, on the other, requires they are controlled in ways that constantly invoke the complexities of fortress strategies and Flusty's species of spaces. In the end, then, skating in Hobart continues legally in other designated skate facilities around the suburbs, has been legal on streets since 1 July 2001, and

remains illegal but practised in public spaces such as Franklin Square in ways that refuse or unsettle formal regulation. In the eyes of many skaters, this last outcome is just as it should be.

## Notes

- 1 Except in quotations, the use of square brackets in this paper is intended to elaborate the scope of particular terms.
- 2 I use the term 'other' here because, in the Australian Road Rules 1999, which legalize street skating in Australia, the users of small-wheeled devices are classified as pedestrians.
- 3 The irony is palpable; so too is the defacement of the speaker's lectern on which is engraved a statement by George Orwell declaring that freedom is the capacity to speak—near which someone has engraved that freedom is the capacity to 'tell George to shut up'.

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## Abstract translations

### *En marge: un conte sur les skateurs et la gouvernance urbaine*

Le «problème» des *skateurs* est confondu au «problème» des jeunes dans les espaces publics, reflétant la montée de la peur du crime à partir de la moitié du XXe siècle et débouchant sur des questions plus générales sur l'espace public et la citoyenneté. Dans cet article, je cherche à souligner certaines des tensions existantes entre les *skateurs* et la gouvernance urbaine dans *Franklin Square* à Hobart, la capitale de Tasmanie en Australie. Pour ce faire, j'emprunte les idées de Nikolas Rose sur la gouvernance et la citoyenneté, celles de Michel de Certeau sur la ville comme espace *propre* et celles de Stephen Flusty sur les stratégies de fortification (*fortress strategies*) et les espèces d'espaces. L'exemple de *Franklin Square* est étudié de deux façons dans ce travail: premièrement, son examen encourage la

prise en considération des cas locaux; deuxièmement, il peut être dévoilé comme un mécanisme heuristique à travers lequel s'expriment les marges de l'espace public et de la citoyenneté. Cet essai se veut une double contribution à la géographie sociale et culturelle: soit, d'une part, une ouverture que j'espère innovatrice sur les vieux débats concernant la localisation et la contestation des relations socio-spatiales; et d'autre part, un dérèglement des stratégies particulières qui placent les *skateurs* «à la marge» et les enferment dans des domaines particuliers de citoyenneté à travers des pratiques spécifiques de gouvernance urbaine.

**Mots clés:** gouvernance urbaine, *skateurs*, relations spatiales, citoyenneté, jeunesse, Hobart.

### *Al margen: un cuento de patinadores y gobernación urbana*

El problema del patinaje ha sido unido con un problema con los jóvenes en espacios públicos, y refleja un aumento en el miedo del crimen que surgió a mediados del siglo veinte y también tiene que ver con cuestiones de espacio público y ciudadanía. Lo que pretendo hacer aquí es destacar algunas de los conflictos entre los patinadores y la gobernación urbana en Franklyn Square, Hobart, la ciudad capital de Tasmania en Australia. Esta tarea lo debo a las ideas sobre gobernación y ciudadanía sugeridas por Nicolás Rose: sobre la verdadera ciudad concebida por Michel de Certeau; y sobre estrategias de fortaleza y especies de espacio promulgados por Stephen Flusty. Franklyn Square funciona de dos maneras en este trabajo. En primer lugar, cuando lo estudiamos nos anima a considerar otros casos locales. Y en segundo lugar, puede ser empleado como un mecanismo heurístico que nos permite explorar las márgenes del espacio público y ciudadanía. Con este papel ofrezco dos contribuciones a la geografía social y cultural, una que extiende algunos debates ya existentes sobre relaciones socio-espaciales situados y contenidos de manera innovativa, y otra que desafía estrategias que colocan los patinadores a los márgenes y sin embargo los incluye en ciertos dominios de la ciudadanía a través de prácticas específicas de gobernación urbana.

**Palabras claves:** gobernación urbana, patinaje, relaciones espaciales, ciudadanía, jóvenes, Hobart.